THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

HOW THE CIA SET UP OSWALD

Three men were assigned major and public roles in the historic events of November 1963 in Dallas, Texas—John F. Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby. Since those tragic days the American news media have devoted a great deal of energy to a critical examination of Kennedy's personal and political life. Indeed, books and even front-page stories in major newspapers and television news programs have delved into the murdered President's tenuous ties, through an alleged sexual relationship, to organized crime. It remains one of the ironies of the past decade and a half that Jack Ruby is now emerging as a patriotic nightclub owner who loved the republic not wisely, but too well, while Lee Harvey Oswald has been reborn in the *Reader's Digest* as a skilled assassin trained by the KGB (Soviet secret police).

In February of this year CBS aired *Ruby and Oswald*, a drama which told us that Ruby was an emotional man, that he truly cared for the President and the President's wife and that he killed Oswald not because he loved him less but because he loved Jacqueline Kennedy more, and therefore quite naturally sought to spare her the additional grief of returning to Dallas for a long and dreary trial. As the current media revisionists tell it, Jack Kennedy was a lecher whose degrading sexual excesses betrayed a loving wife and a naive and trusting country. Ruby, on the other hand, suffered greatly through his pure and abiding love. In a sense, he both killed and died for us all.

And what of Lee Harvey Oswald? The forgotten, inept and hated loner of the early 1960s returns to us in the late 1970s as a cool, KGB-trained killing machine, courtesy of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's favorite transmission belt for the dissemination of false information, the *Reader's Digest*, and the questionable theories of an author who put his legitimizing credential as "critic of the Warren Commission Report" on the line for a budget of approximately $2 million. No one dare call Edward Jay Epstein, author of the *Reader's Digest* book *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald*, a cheap whore.

The lives and times of Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald were full and troubled. Neither was a loner. Both were deeply involved with American intelligence assignments, and Ruby had served as a front man for organized crime for most of his life. Even a cursory examination of their various assignments will move us much nearer to understanding the implications of the assassination of President Kennedy. Before we look more closely at the *real* Jack Ruby, however, it may be instructive to look at the image of him now being promoted.

According to the television production, Ruby killed Oswald so that Kennedy's family—above all, the President's widow—would not have to suffer through a public trial. This media fabrication may now establish a trend. During May of this year David R. Berkowitz, the self-styled "Son of Sam" killer, pleaded guilty in New York City to having murdered six persons and wounded seven others during a year-long rampage with a .44 revolver. While entering his plea, he explained to the court (reportedly with a straight face) that he had decided to plead guilty "to spare the families of the victims the circus of a trial." Perhaps the TV "documentary drama" showing Ruby agonizing over Jacqueline Kennedy's forthcoming return to Dallas inspired Berkowitz.

Ruby, in fact, was a hired killer who worked for the FBI and organized crime. He murdered Oswald as an assignment. Shortly after Ruby's arrest—three cheers here for the Dallas police, who were able to apprehend the hit man in their midst—

Report by Mark Lane

Illustration by Peter Green

his attorney, Tom Howard, told veteran reporter Alonzo Hudkins that he and his client were depressed. They were unable to develop an adequate legal defense to the charge. Hudkins told me recently that he then suggested to Howard that Ruby adopt a story that might create some public sympathy for Oswald's assailant. At that point, according to Hudkins, he thought up the idea that Ruby should say he shot Oswald to spare Jackie Kennedy the trauma of a trial. Howard's face lit up, and he said, "Well, that sounds real good. I'll tell Jack about that today."

Later, Howard called Hudkins to tell him that "Jack loved the story and he is going to use it." A few years later the myth became reality as the American people saw an actor portraying Ruby going vicariously through Jackie's suffering until, as a man of compassion, he impulsively put an end to the threat.

Jack Ruby emerged as a central character in the Dallas drama when he shot JFK's alleged assassin on November 24, 1963, in the basement of the Dallas Police and Courts Building (and before a live-television audience). Oswald had been a prisoner for two days, during which time the local police and the FBI both silenced and isolated him. He had been interrogated for more than 12 hours by FBI agents, prosecuting attorneys and local and state authorities, and yet the Warren Commission reported without further explanation that no tape recordings, stenographic records or comprehensive notes survived the interview session. Therefore, we were unable to learn what Oswald had said during the lengthy periods of questioning. The suspect was further isolated when, after he requested that a lawyer come forward to provide legal assistance for him, the three lawyers retained for that purpose by the Dallas Civil Liberties Union were denied the right to talk with him. Unfortunately, neither the lawyers nor the American Civil Liberties Union made any effort to overcome the blocks set up by the FBI and the local police to deny Oswald's right to counsel.

Just after Oswald was murdered by Ruby, who had worked for the FBI in Dallas in 1959, the FBI destroyed a letter from Oswald, which was then in its files in Dallas. The forensic evidence alone provides ample proof of a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. Therefore, if Oswald was guilty, he was part of the conspiracy; if he was not part of the conspiracy, he was innocent. From the viewpoint of the assassins it was necessary to silence Oswald while he was in police custody, for if guilty he might have incriminated others, and in any event his trial would no doubt have provided a forum for evidence of conspiracy. If Oswald was innocent, the evidence might well have established that fact, alerting the nation that the murderers were still at large. Ruby, from the vantage point of the conspirators, met the historically necessary obligation that self-preservation imposed upon them.

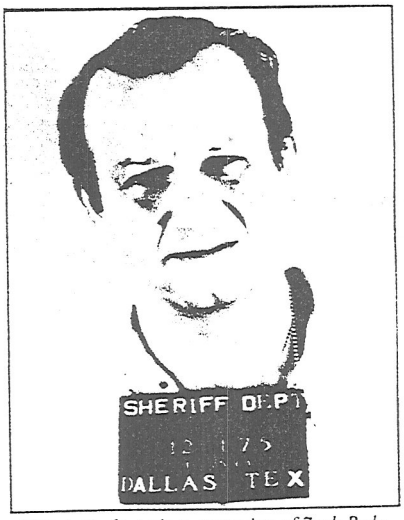
Photo by United Press International

Lee Oswald: "Lone assassin," or pawn in a terrible game played at the highest levels of government?

Who was Jack Ruby, and how did he get into the basement of the Dallas Police and Courts Building to kill Lee Harvey Oswald? The Warren Commission pretended to confront these questions, secured some discomfiting information that it ignored or suppressed, and was both an accomplice and willing victim of the FBI's refusal to share its information.

With the limited historical perspective afforded by little more than a decade, it appears that Jack Ruby may be the Rosetta stone of the assassination. A new investigation might profitably begin by examining the many facets of his life. Only recently did I discover that he had received help getting into the Police and Courts Building and that he did not enter through the Main Street ramp. Witnesses in Dallas, alive although frightened, know that Charles Batchelor, then assistant chief of the Dallas Police Department, personally escorted Jack Ruby into the basement via an elevator and that moments later Ruby executed Oswald. Batchelor was later promoted to chief of police.

Batchelor had played a major and perhaps decisive role in determining the route of the President's motorcade. And several days before the assassination in Dealey Plaza he was the ranking representative of the Dallas Police Department to drive over the selected route with federal authorities.



UPI photo

This is the last photo ever taken of Jack Ruby, whose connections to U.S. intelligence and organized crime have long been overlooked.

When the Warren Commission asserted that Ruby had not been part of organized crime, it did so by suppressing the FBI's information about him and by alleging

that local authorities stated that Ruby was not so involved. The local authority cited was Assistant Chief of Police Charles Batchelor.

The Commission's commitment to cover up the possibility of Ruby's involvement in any action other than one impulsive act on November 24, 1963, was no doubt responsible for its determination that Ruby was not at Parkland Memorial Hospital (where Kennedy and Texas Governor John Connally were taken) on November 22, 1963, in spite of very strong testimony to the contrary. For instance, Seth Kantor, a reporter for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, testified before the Commission that he not only had seen Ruby at the hospital that afternoon but had also spoken to him. Ruby, Kantor maintained, had tugged at his coat and asked him whether or not he (Ruby) should open his club that night in view of the tragedy. As a reporter for the *Dallas Times Herald*, Kantor had known Ruby for years. In spite of repeated and disbelieving interrogations by the Commission, Kantor was adamant. He testified: "I *did* talk to the man, and he *did* stop me, and I just can't have any doubt about that."

OSWALD IS SHOT: Lee Harvey Oswald cringes as Jack Ruby attacks him at Dallas jail. Policeman is J. R. Leavelle.

Kantor's testimony as to Jack Ruby's presence in the hospital on that date was corroborated by several other witnesses, but to no avail. All the Commission could secure to support the preconception that Ruby was not there was its allegation that Ruby *denied* it—or, as one Commission lawyer told a witness in an effort to convince her to change her statement: "Jack himself has denied very vehemently he was out at the hospital." And the bullet, which tied Oswald's purported rifle to the assassination, materialized at the hospital *while Ruby was there*. According to the witness who discovered the slug—Darrell C. Tomlinson, a senior engineer at Parkland—it rolled off a stretcher, either President Kennedy's or Governor Connally's, after an unknown man "pushed the stretcher."

* * *

In 1959 the American intelligence community entered into a partnership with organized crime with the aim of assassinating Fidel Castro. Evidence uncovered in 1975 by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (Church Committee) revealed that a series of abortive efforts to kill the Cuban premier were undertaken by this partnership. Also in 1959, not long after the victory of the Cuban Revolution and while that country was still in a state of transition, Jack Ruby visited Havana.

For the Cuban people the island's major harvests were agricultural, including sugar cane and tobacco, but for American criminal syndicates the harvest was freshly laundered cash taken each night from their casinos—the largest and most lucrative gambling establishments in the world. In August 1959 this cash-flow was threatened by the new Castro government. It was at this time that Lewis J. McWillie, manager of the Tropicana casino (the world's largest, owned by Meyer Lansky's syndicate), invited Ruby to Havana, paid his air fare and spent many hours with him there.

Ruby's visit to Havana followed his effort to secure a letter of introduction to Castro. He offered to purchase such a letter for $25,000, according to the statement of Robert R. McKeown.

McKeown might have been the most important witness to testify before the Warren Commission. Two of the Commission's lawyers felt his testimony was urgently required. Had McKeown testified, the course of the past decade and a half might have been materially different. Having learned what McKeown knew, the members of the Commission could hardly have insisted that either Ruby or Oswald were lone assassins. The Commission, determined to find no conspiracy, resolved its dilemma by refusing to call McKeown as a witness and by denying permission to the Commission lawyers to take his testimony. Robert McKeown remains a man of mystery. His life reads not unlike an exciting adventure story.

McKeown and an associate had invented and developed a machine to clean coffee beans. That task had been time-consuming and had previously been done by hand. "We took our machine to Cuba," McKeown said, "because of the cheap labor there."

Fulgencio Batista was running the country; his militia called upon McKeown and said the dictator wanted to be a partner in the venture. Batista wanted a 20-percent interest in the company. McKeown, stifling feelings of outrage, explained that he was an American citizen and businessman. The guards shrugged and left. They returned later, and McKeown offered a similar explanation. They again left. Other guards returned, and McKeown—at rifle and bayonet point—was thrown into a military vehicle and then flown to Miami. He was told he would be killed if he ever returned to Cuba.

McKeown brooded about his loss, and was then approached by a representative of Carlos Prio, the former president of Cuba who had been overthrown by Batista. Would McKeown like to meet Prio to discuss ways of regaining his business? The meeting was set up, and a 20-year friendship began.

Prio explained that a revolution to oust Batista was under way. It was to be well-financed and led in the field by a man named Fidel Castro. Prio was to be restored as president, and McKeown would get his business back. The operation needed a talented, sophisticated, well-connected, highly motivated American businessman to secure weapons and get them to Castro in Cuba. McKeown agreed. He was well-paid and anxious to again have control of his lucrative setup in Cuba.

McKeown spent more than a week with Castro at a hotel in Tampico, Mexico. He embarked upon a plan to get guns and ammunition to Cuba for Castro's troops. [*Editor's Note: Following the successful*

revolution Fidel Castro, not Carlos Prio, became Cuba's new head of state. Subsequently, Prio joined forces with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in an effort to overthrow, or assassinate, Castro.]

McKeown arranged for weapons to be taken from a U.S Army arsenal in Arkansas and delivered to him in vans. He also handled large sums of money given to two United States senators. McKeown was a Houston-based engineer who had contacts in the business world, including the petroleum industry, and in government. He sent weapons to Cuba in oil tankers, ships carrying oil drums (in which machine guns and bazookas were stashed away) and in airlifts to the interior of the island. Before the operation was betrayed, resulting in his arrest in 1958, McKeown had delivered $8-million worth of weapons and ammunition to the insurgents. He personally flew to Cuba twice during the revolution and met with its leaders.

McKeown's final plan involved the purchase of a strategically located house, in which he stored $2-million worth of weapons, and the purchase of a ship to take them to Cuba. He was arrested, the ship seized and the weapons confiscated by the FBI. Charged with 15 felony counts, he faced a life sentence. But Carlos Prio and his CIA sponsors intervened, and McKeown was never asked how he secured the arms. He was sentenced in Federal District Court in Houston to 90 days, of which he served 59.

In 1959, after his takeover, Fidel Castro came to Houston, publicly embraced McKeown and offered him a place in the Cuban government, urging him to return to Cuba with him at once. But McKeown, who had been placed on probation for five years, did not wish to leave the country without permission. Castro said, "You will be the only American in our government. You can have your business back, franchises, anything you want. Without your arsenal we would have failed." But McKeown never could gain permission from a federal court to return to Cuba.

It was later that year that Jack Ruby visited McKeown and offered him $25,000 for a letter of introduction to Castro. It now appears that Ruby was working for the organized crime/American intelligence partnership seeking to kill the Cuban leader. After the assassination of President Kennedy, FBI agents interviewed McKeown, who recounted the Ruby offer. One of the major scandals of the Warren Commission Report was the refusal of the Commission members to question McKeown, a point I emphasized in *Rush to Judgment*, published in 1966, long before I met McKeown.

Several months before the assassination Lee Harvey Oswald, together with a Cuban identified only as Mr. Hernandez, called upon McKeown. Oswald said that he represented a movement in a Latin American country and that he wished to purchase weapons for a revolution. McKeown, still on probation, urged him to leave at once. Oswald returned minutes later and offered $10,000 for four semi-automatic rifles with telescopic sights. McKeown was tempted, but declined. Had the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building been traced back to Castro's purveyor of weapons, a situation potentially greater than the Missile Crisis might well have exploded.

After the assassination George De Mohrenschildt called upon McKeown and tried to persuade him that an impostor, not Oswald, had met him. Since McKeown had told no one of his meeting with Oswald, he wondered how De Mohrenschildt had heard of it.

George De Mohrenschildt had been employed by the CIA and had brought Oswald from New Orleans to Dallas just prior to Kennedy's assassination. When De Mohrenschildt heard that Oswald had been charged with the shooting, he became irate and said, "The FBI in Dallas and Fort Worth both assured me that Oswald was harmless." Later he con-

Photo courtesy the Houston Chronicle

Robert McKeown, chief gun-runner to the Cuban Revolution, chats with Fidel Castro in Houston in April 1959. Later, Oswald and Ruby both had occasion to call on the resourceful businessman.

Author Mark Lane managed John F. Kennedy's 1960 election campaign in New York City.

cluded that Oswald was innocent and had been set up to take the blame. De Mohrenschildt was completing a manuscript dealing with the conspiracy to kill Kennedy when he died under mysterious circumstances in Florida. Two days later Carlos Prio also died in Florida, likewise under mysterious circumstances.

In 1961, when Castro's political position was understood, Prio moved into American intelligence circles and became leader of the anti-Castro forces in America. In that position he offered McKeown a substantial sum to use his friendship with Castro to kill him.

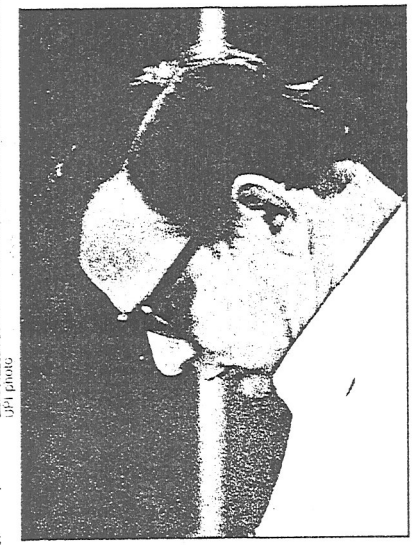
UPI photo

Some critics feel that Edward Jay Epstein's biography of Oswald continues the cover-up.

It seems apparent now that McKeown's statement to the FBI in 1964 and subsequent statements to me, together with other available evidence, indicate that in 1963 Oswald, who had been employed by American intelligence since 1958 while in the Marine Corps, was given the assignment of securing a rifle with a telescopic sight from McKeown. During that same general time-frame, October 1963, the Central Intelligence Agency established a series of charades in Mexico City for the purpose of making it appear that Oswald had visited the Soviet Embassy there and had met with a man, described in CIA reports as the KGB officer responsible for assassinations in the Western Hemisphere. The CIA effort to frame Oswald also included a trip to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City by an impostor pretending to be Oswald.

FBI and CIA documents, now available, demonstrate that the "Oswald" who visited both the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City in October 1963 was not Lee Harvey Oswald. The Warren Commission, terrorized by the possible consequences of a thorough investigation, decided not to conduct such a probe.

A serious investigation would have revealed that Ruby was part of organized crime in Chicago at least as long ago as 1939 and that at that time he may have been a Syndicate hit man. It also would have revealed that Ruby began working for the FBI in Dallas on March 11, 1959, and that when he was on assignment in Cuba, possibly to assassinate Fidel Castro, he was employed by the organized crime/intelligence alliance that had already tried and failed to kill Castro and was to try many more times in the coming years. A full investigation would have shown that Oswald had been given the intelligence assignment of buying at least one rifle with a telescopic sight from the man who had provided the weapons of war for Fidel Castro's guerrilla army.



Marine Lee Oswald told David Bucknell he expected to return from the USSR "a hero."

Had McKeown sold that rifle and had it been found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository—followed by the "evidence" that only a month before the assassination Oswald had returned to Dallas from talks with the KGB officer in charge of assassinations (and a visit to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City to obtain a visa, ostensibly to flee to a Communist country after killing the President)—the world might not be intact today.

Apparently, all that thwarted the mad scheme to make Castro appear responsible for Kennedy's killing was the refusal of McKeown to sell Oswald the rifle and the desire of the Commission to cover up all traces of conspiracy in the interest of "national security" and international peace. The frightened little men who ran the Warren Commission were afraid to conduct a search for the truth because they thought (incorrectly as it turns out) that they knew just where it would lead

While the information secured from McKeown permits us to place Lee Harvey Oswald in a proper historical context for the first time, and provides some evidence of his role as an intelligence agent, statements just made by Oswald's Marine Corps buddies provide proof of his espionage assignments.

In February 1977 a Gallup poll showed that approximately 81 percent of the population believed the Warren Commission Report to be a cruel hoax. The poll also showed that more Americans were inclined to consider the CIA and the FBI as the possible assassins of President Kennedy than were convinced that Oswald had acted alone.

Because of the public's attitudes, the police and intelligence launched a massive public-relations campaign to direct suspicion away from their respective organizations. In long-suppressed documents J. Edgar Hoover had urged the use of the *Reader's Digest* to deal with the question of conspiracy in these matters. The CIA's use of television and radio networks and of the *New York Times, Washington Post* and *Washington Star,* as well as the major news weeklies, had been suspected for some time.

Soon a full-scale program to connect Oswald posthumously with a Russian secret-police agent was under way—led, almost predictably, by the *Reader's Digest.* As previously mentioned, Reader's Digest Press published Edward Jay Epstein's *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald,* and the magazine itself ran excerpts from the book in two consecutive issues, accompanied by a nearly unprecedented advertising campaign. Epstein had been given, as he described it, "an almost unlimited budget." He, being a modest fellow, spent approximately $2 million to write the book, which cannot possibly earn for its sponsors any sum approaching the amount expended. This raises two questions: Why did the *Reader's Digest* embark upon a plan doomed to financial failure? And was the money, in this intelligence escapade, really provided by the magazine?

The extravagance of the project is hardly reflected in the book itself, a shoddy work in which obvious errors and blatantly false statements abound. For example, Epstein flatly states, "Ballistics cannot be done on pistols." What he meant to say is that a ballistics examination of a slug fired from a pistol cannot prove that the bullet came from a particular pistol to the exclusion of all other pistols in the world. However, that statement is false, as any teenager who has ever toured the FBI's headquarters in Washington, D.C., knows.

Epstein offers this thesis: Oswald was a KGB operative while still in the Marine Corps in 1958. At that time he was

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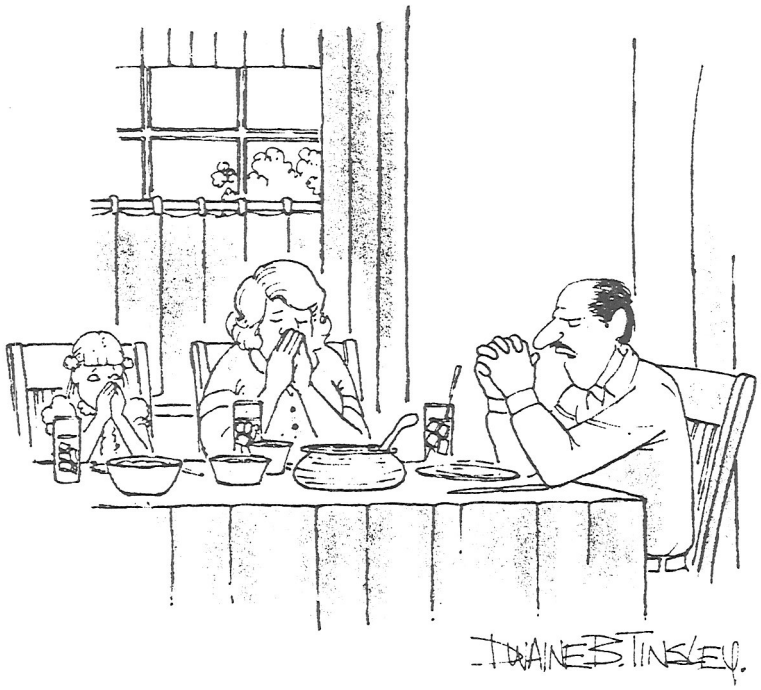
stationed at Atsugi, Japan, and was assigned to work on the most secret of all military projects—the U-2 spy plane. Oswald, a mere private first class, was paid substantial sums of money by the Russians to pass secrets along to them.

According to the Epstein-*Reader's Digest* scenario, proof that Oswald worked for the KGB can be found in the fact that he frequented the Queen Bee, a fashionable Japanese club, and that he spent large sums of money there. Epstein was apparently informed by his intelligence sources that the Queen Bee was a place where military secrets were discussed and where the Office of Naval Intelligence knew that a spy might operate. He writes in *Legend* that Oswald was the only lowly enlisted man there and that even lower-ranking officers would stand out in that club. In addition, Epstein notes that Oswald entered into a liaison with a beautiful Japanese woman, a suspected KGB contact, and that he undoubtedly paid her a great deal of money. He even brought her back to the top-secret U-2 base, Epstein assures us.

If Epstein, almost 20 years after the event, was able to discover that Oswald was a Russian spy, based exclusively on information well-known to Oswald's superiors in the Marine Corps at the time, is one not entitled, indeed compelled, to ask why the Marine Corps took no action?

Oswald rubbed elbows at the Queen Bee with high-ranking military officers and rubbed more than elbows with high-priced Japanese prostitutes. He was a big spender at the club, and was perhaps the only enlisted man who appeared regularly at the establishment. And he was assigned to the U-2 project. Had Oswald not been given permission to do what he was doing, he would have been suspected at once, and military justice—to use a self-contradictory term—would have had its harsh way with the soldier before his second effort to lavish funds at a club where he did not belong. Who, then, *did* give Oswald permission?

Recently, a former Marine who had served with Oswald in Santa Ana, California, after Oswald had returned from Atsugi, began to talk about his discussions with him. His name is David Bucknell. The Warren Commission never talked with him and neither did Epstein. In April 1978 French television presented three extraordinary documentaries about the Kennedy assassination. These incisive programs were developed by Jean-Michel Charlier, a well-known French filmmaker.



"Oh, Lord, thank you for the harmful chemicals and preservatives we are about to receive."

Following the program Wesley Leibeler and David Belin (two lawyers who had served as assistant counsel for the Warren Commission) and Epstein and I participated in a discussion. I played a portion of an interview I had recorded with Bucknell. Epstein only said, "They never told me that he was in Oswald's unit." Then he added, "His name wasn't on the roster I was given."

Yet Bucknell was there. I met with Bucknell and James Botelho at my apartment in Venice, California, in April 1978. Botelho, even Epstein and the Warren Commission agree, was Oswald's roommate when they were stationed at the Marine Air Control Squadron (MACS-9) at Santa Ana. Botelho and Bucknell asserted that they had been there together with Oswald. After his discharge from the Marine Corps Botelho became a police officer in California, and later a judge.

Bucknell told me that one day he and Oswald went to a tavern near the base to drink a few beers. Two women approached them. Later that day Oswald told Bucknell the incident with the women reminded him of an experience he had had at Atsugi.

Oswald had been alone in a bar when an attractive Japanese woman approached him, he told Bucknell. She asked him some questions about his work on the base. That work was, of course, with the supersecret U-2 program. Oswald, predictably, reported that conversation to his superior officer, who then arranged for a meeting on the base between Oswald and a man dressed in civilian clothes.

The man, a "security" or "security-intelligence" operator, explained to Oswald that he could do his country a great service. Oswald was told that the woman was a KGB contact and that he would be given false information to pass on to her. Oswald agreed, and while still a teenager in the Marine Corps he became an intelligence operative. His liaison with the woman continued; he was given money to spend at the Queen Bee, and apparently encouraged by American intelligence to enter into a sexual relationship with the woman.

Years later, while examining Oswald's medical records—released along with thousands of irrelevant documents by the Warren Commission in 1964—I discovered a most remarkable entry. The chronological record of medical care for Lee Harvey Oswald (published by the Commission as Donabedian Exhibit No. 1, Volume 19, page 605) noted that on September 16, 1958, he had been treated for gonorrhea while

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in the Marine Corps at Atsugi. The Armed Services tend to consider venereal disease a serious problem and punish enlisted men who contract a dose. The affidavit stated that Oswald got the disease "in line of duty." It further exculpated Oswald from any responsibility by stating, "Not due to own misconduct."

When this startling information was released on French television, Epstein answered, "They told me that they always write 'in line of duty' for any disease or injury. They told me that when Oswald accidentally shot himself with a .22 pistol, they wrote 'in line of duty' on that medical report." Epstein never did reveal who "they" were, but anyone who has served in the American military knows that he was given—and he accepted—false information. Had Epstein merely turned to the next page of Oswald's medical record, he would have seen that the words "in line of duty" did not appear in connection with the self-inflicted wound or in connection with any other medical problem for which Oswald had received treatment.

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Regarding Oswald's tour of duty in Japan, Bucknell can only report what Oswald recounted to him. However, he was involved directly with Oswald in an intelligence effort when they both were at MACS-9. In 1959 Oswald, Bucknell and others were ordered to report to the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) at the base. There a civilian began an effort aimed at recruiting those present for an intelligence operation against "Communists" in Cuba. Oswald was selected to make several additional trips to CID. Later he told Bucknell that the civilian who served as his contact or control at Atsugi had taken over the same job at Santa Ana. Still later, Oswald confided to Bucknell that he, Oswald, was to be discharged from the Marine Corps very soon and that he would surface in the Soviet Union. Oswald told Bucknell that he was being sent there on assignment by American intelligence and that he would return to the United States in 1961 as a hero.

Judge James Botelho probably knew Oswald as well as anyone at MACS-9. They shared the same room, and Botelho took Oswald home to meet his parents. Although the intelligence-inspired revisionists are attempting retroactively to make Oswald a Marxist Marine, Botelho denies it. "I'm very conservative now," he told me, "and I was at least as conservative at that time. Oswald was not a Communist or a Marxist. If he was, I would have taken violent action against him and so would many of the other Marines in the unit."

When they were in the service together, Botelho engaged in many discussions with Oswald. I asked him what he thought of Oswald when he learned that he had "defected." He said: "Well, when Oswald's presence in the Soviet Union was made public, it was the talk of everyone who knew him at the base. First of all, I was aware of the fact that the radio codes and other codes were not changed and that Oswald knew all of them. That made me suspicious. I knew Oswald was not a Communist and was, in fact, anti-Soviet. Then, when no real investigations about Oswald occurred at the base, I was sure that Oswald was on an intelligence assignment in Russia.

"In Epstein's book he quotes a former Marine named Delgado as stating that civilians swarmed all over the base after Oswald surfaced in Russia. That is not true at all. Delgado had been transferred before that date, in any event, and if there had been such an investigation, he would not have seen it. Two civilians dropped in, asked a few questions, took no written statements and recorded no interviews with witnesses. It was the most casual of investigations. It was a cover-investigation so it could be said that there had been an investigation."

Judge Botelho concluded, "Oswald, it was said, was the only Marine ever to defect from his country to another country, a Communist country, during peacetime. That was a major event. When the Marine Corps and American intelligence decided not to probe the reasons for the 'defection,' I knew then what I know now: Oswald was on an assignment in Russia for American intelligence."

Very likely, the truth about the assassination of President Kennedy resides in CIA files and in the minds of CIA officials. After the House Select Committee on Assassinations was established in 1976 a tough-minded former prosecuting attorney named Richard Sprague was appointed its chief counsel and director. He pledged to subpoena every relevant CIA and FBI file and to question every pertinent witness from the intelligence community. The intelligence organizations, through what they refer to as their "assets" in the news media, launched a vitriolic attack against Sprague, who was then eased out of his position by frightened members of Congress.

In June 1977 Sprague was replaced by G. Robert Blakey, formerly of the Department of Justice, who has declined to subpoena any FBI or CIA documents and who has hired his staff only after securing the approval of both the FBI and CIA. He has also agreed not to disclose to the American people anything he might learn from those two organizations without their approval.

On the day that the Select Committee was established by Congress, George O'Toole, a former CIA agent, turned to me and said that the most corrupt and inept institution in America has just been called upon to investigate the two most duplicitous organizations in our country's history. He added, "The CIA and FBI will have that committee for breakfast tomorrow morning." He was wrong. It took several months.